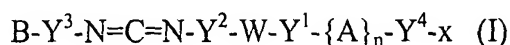


The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please cancel Claims 2 and 4-13.

1. (Currently Amended) A fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound precursor having a halogen atom or a sulfonic acid group which is represented by the following general formula (I):



Wherein,

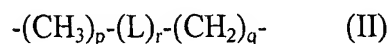
X represents a halogen atom or a sulfonic acid group;

A represents a functional group selected from the group consisting of $-\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{NHCO}-$, $-\text{CONH}-$, $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{NR}^1-$ wherein R^1 represents a linear, cyclic or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, $-\text{NR}^2\text{R}^3-$ wherein R^2 and R^3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may have a substituent, provided that when one of R^2 and R^3 is a hydrogen atom, the other represents a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may have a substituent, or R^2 and R^3 may be bonded to each other to form as a whole a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group which may contain an oxygen atom, $-\text{COO}-$, $-\text{OCO}-$, $-\text{NHSO}_2-$, $-\text{NHC(S)NH}-$ and $\text{SO}_2\text{NH}-$;

n represents 0 or 1;

W represents a direct bond or a quaternary onium group;

Y^1 , Y^2 , Y^3 and Y^4 each represent a functional group represented by the general formula (II):



wherein, L represents a functional group selected from the group consisting of $-\text{CH}_2-$,

Preliminary Amendment

-NHCO-, -CONH-, -O-, -S-, -NR¹- wherein R¹ has the same meaning as defined for the formula (I), -NR²R³- wherein R² and R³ have the same meanings as defined for the formula (I), -COO-, -OCO-, -NHSO₂-, -NHC(S)NH- and SO₂NH-; p and q each represent an integer of from 0 to 20; and r represents 0 or 1;

B represents a hydrogen atom or a monovalent organic group ~~being either the same as or different from~~ $W-Y^1-[A]_n-Y^4-X$ in the formula (I); and

Any of the functional groups represented by B, Y¹, Y², Y³, Y⁴, A and W may contain a group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Original) The fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound precursor according to Claim 1, wherein at least one functional group selected from B, Y¹, Y², Y³, Y⁴, A and W in the formula (I) has at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom.

Claims 4-13 (Cancelled).